



State of Illinois
Pat Quinn, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation
Ann L. Schneider, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 10, 2012

CONTACT:
Josh Kauffman 217-558-0517
Guy Tridgell 312-814-4693

Satellite Coordinates:
Slug: OTSD Kickoff Press Conference
Date: 8/10/12
Time: 11:45 AM (CT) – 12:00 PM (CT)
Satellite: AMC 15KU
Transponder: 01
Slot: D9
Downlink Frequency: 11733.5
Downlink Polarization: V
Bandwidth: 9 MHz
Symbol Rate: 3.978729
FEC: 3 / 4
Data Rate: 5.5

For technical assistance please call IOCI Media Services at 217-785-5499.

IDOT, Ford, Allstate, Illinois Secretary of State and Law Enforcement Launch Operation Teen Safe Driving at State Fair

*Unique Program Contributes to 48 Percent Drop in Teen Motor Vehicle
Fatalities*

SPRINGFIELD –Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) officials were joined today by representatives from the Ford Motor Company Fund, The Allstate Foundation, the Illinois Secretary of State and state police to kick-off the sixth year of Operation Teen Safe Driving (OTSD) at the state fairgrounds. The statewide program, led by IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety, is the first-of-its kind across the nation, and has contributed to a 48 percent decline in teen fatalities over the past five years.

"OTSD has proven to be a unique and impactful public-private partnership that utilizes the creativity of Illinois students to further boost traffic safety in schools and communities across the state," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. "The overwhelming value of peer-to-peer influence and innovation drives the program to accomplish continual success, and we encourage all interested high schools to participate this year as well."

The goal of OTSD is to reduce teen fatalities and injuries by utilizing the creativity of Illinois teens in a friendly competition to impact their respective communities. The program enables

Illinois high schools to apply for a grant to initiate a peer-led teen safe driving program within their schools. The schools compete against other schools, within their regions, for one of five winning spots. The winners receive prize money to use toward their post-prom event, and are invited to participate in Ford Motor Company Fund's Driving Skills for Life Ride and Drive events.

This life-saving, innovative program is augmented by crucial sponsorships from the Ford Motor Company Fund and The Allstate Foundation and enlists young people to teach safe driving skills to their peers.

"Ford Motor Company Fund and our award-winning teen driving program, Ford Driving Skills for Life, are pleased to enter into our sixth year of commitment to this life-saving teen safe driving program," said Jim Graham, Manager, Ford Driving Skills for Life program, Ford Motor Company. "Vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens in America, and Operation Teen Safe Driving continues our ongoing commitment to safety with proven results across the state."

"Saving lives and preventing injuries among teen drivers is a priority for The Allstate Foundation and our teen safe driving signature program, and we are proud to support this effort for the sixth year," said Bill McGrath, Regional Sales Leader for the Midwest Region of Allstate Insurance. "We're looking forward to a continued decline in teen road fatalities in Illinois as a result of this partnership with Operation Teen Safe Driving."

Applications are now available at www.teensafedrivingillinois.org and are due Oct. 1, 2012 for the 2012-13 school year. Based on the applications submitted, a minimum of 10 schools will be selected from each of the seven regions. Those selected schools will then receive \$2,000 to develop their teen safe driving program. From each of the seven regions, five top winners will receive prizes to be used at their post-prom events in amounts from \$500 to \$2,500. In addition to the monetary prizes, each of the winning schools will be invited to attend one of the Ford Motor Company Fund's Driving Skills for Life Ride and Drive events. The events provide a lifetime opportunity for teens to learn critical driving techniques from professional drivers in a controlled environment.

"I am pleased and encouraged that the number of teen crash fatalities has dropped significantly since my Teen Driver Safety Task Force issued recommendations that led to the strengthening of Illinois' graduated driver licensing (GDL) program," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "Since the stronger GDL program took effect in 2008, teen driving deaths have nearly been cut in half. Entering its sixth year, the Operation Teen Safe Driving program will continue to draw even more attention to the issue of teen driving safety by utilizing the creativity of teens to develop effective safe driving messages for their peers."

The selection process requires students to identify significant traffic safety issues within their community (i.e., underage drinking, driving unbuckled, driving impaired, driving distracted). The participating will provide information explaining how they would combat the problem and implement a teen awareness program in the school and community.

"Illinois State Police applaud teens who practice and promote safe driving habits," said Illinois State Police Commander Jay Keeven. "Operation Teen Safe Driving's peer to peer learning experience encourages teens to think about driving safely and ultimately prepares them to be responsible adult drivers," added Keeven.

A total of 105 high schools participated in the 2012-13 program. Examples of innovative ideas proposed by students in previous years were: branding the school's safe driving message on prom/homecoming tickets, bumper stickers, etc.; arranging school assemblies with victim impact speakers, fatal goggle simulations, crash re-enactments, asking local businesses to display safe driving messages on their marquees; and setting up permanent traffic signs throughout the community. Students also came up with slogans such as: "Don't Drive InTEXTicated," "Don't Be Lazy – Click It Like Crazy," "Think What's NXT B4 U TXT," "Risk Takers are Accident Makers," and "Distracted Driving is Unattractive Driving."

###